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796.5
F2ar
1982

PLEASE RETURN

THE SMITH RIVER FLOATER LOG

1982

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

'Saw a deer in the river and near camp tonight.
Saw beaver in river near camp.
Ran "The" Rapid. Great fun!
And the ever ineffable incredible scenery!
Climbed a butte near camp.'

MAR 3 0 1983

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The Smith River, it's one of those magical natural wonderlands which seem able to reach back and pluck a primordial heart string of those who experience it. The above quote, resembling lines from the Lewis and Clark Journals, was an anonymous entry, in a 1982 Floater's Log, of one who has obviously experienced the Smith! This quality lends a value to this stretch of free-flowing river that defies measurement but has been recognized by more and more recreational floaters during the past decade.



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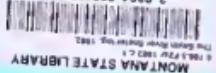


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THE LOG

The last user survey was conducted on the Smith River in 1980. With the Smith River Ranger concept only on its third year and with related management procedures still evolving, some importance was assigned to user attitudes. The desire was to determine what was on the floaters' minds concerning their excursion rather than to channel their attention to only those facets that have become apparent to the river manager. To accomplish this, a "floaters log" approach was taken, rather than a traditional question and answer survey. A sample copy of the Floater's Log is found on the next page.

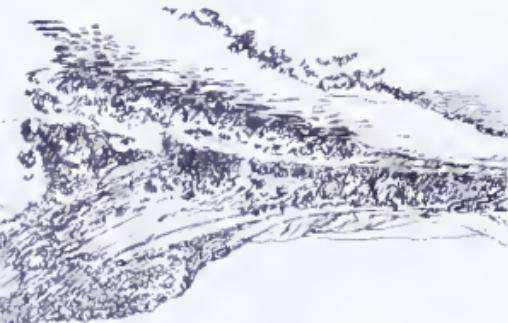
The log requires a greater degree of dedication to complete than a traditional survey as reflected by its return rate. Only 44 Floater's Logs were returned in 1982 compared to 110 mailed surveys in 1980 with a comparable number of floaters. However, the floaters had the freedom to comment freely on what they felt were the issues rather than answer preconceived survey questions. Hopefully, these float logs reflect the real issues on a qualitative basis more than quantitatively.





Help us learn more about the management needs of the Smith River. Keeping a floater's log can be fun. Please have one member of your party complete these questions and the following floater's log during your trip.

Thank you



Date _____

City or Town of Residence _____

1. How many persons are in your party?
2. Please indicate the number and type of craft in the party.

Canoe Kayak Flat bottom
 Raft Pow Boat Other

3. Is this a professionally guided party?

Yes No

Region #
Mountain Department of Fish & Game
Wildlife and Parks
Montane Department of Fish & Game

Thanks You.

Please leave your completed floater's log in the collection box at the Federated Forest Service office. If you would like your log returned to you, return it to the Federated Forest Service office and enter your name and mailing address.

Registration & Floater's Log



Smith River

General Comments

DAY ONE

Date _____

Time-In _____

Point of Departure _____ (circle on Map)

Name _____

Please enter your general impressions, pleasures, and disappointments of your float day

DAY TWO

Date _____

Time-In _____

Please enter your general impressions, pleasures, and disappointments of your float day

Campsite # 1 _____ (Mark "X" on Map)

Name _____

Time-Out _____ (If end of trip, circle on map.)

What is your impression of this camp site?

Campsite # 2 _____ (Mark "X" on Map)

Name _____

Time-Out _____ (If end of trip, circle on map.)

What is your impression of this camp site?

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Unlike the previous two years, registration cards were not available at the Camp Baker put-in point. Instead, the Floater's Log was made available in the Camp Baker registration box and a request for the general registration information was incorporated in the Log.

Residence

Lewis and Clark, and Cascade counties collectively supplied 45% of the Smith River Floater's Log contributors. This compares favorably to 41% in 1980. Missoula follows with 12% of the Logs in 1982 and 12% of the surveys in 1980. This correlation of residence information with the larger sampling in 1980 lends validity to the Log's ability to accurately reflect the entire cohort of 1982 Smith River floaters.

As in 1980, visitors were most likely to come from the nearest population centers; Great Falls - Cascade County; Helena - Lewis and Clark County, and Missoula - Missoula County in descending order. Contrary to this pattern, however, no floaters were identified by Log entry from Meagher County, in which the float trip begins. This phenomenon was consistent with 1980 when only 1% of visitors originated from Meagher County.

Residence

County or State of Residence	Number of Parties	Percent of Parties
Lewis and Clark	15	26
Cascade	11	19
Missoula	7	12
Washington	4	7
Ravalli	3	5
Beaverhead	2	4
Gallatin	2	4
Jefferson	2	4
Silver Bow	2	4
Idaho	2	4
Flathead	1	2
Park	1	2
Wheatland	1	2
Yellowstone	1	2
California	1	2
Kansas	1	2
South Dakota	1	2
Total	57 ¹	97% ²

¹Some parties were made up of persons from more than one place of residence.

²Does not equal 100% because of rounding.

Persons per Party

The average party consisted of 5.7 people (5.9 in 1980). The most common party size was two people and the largest was 25.

Persons/Party	/ 1 /	2 /	3 /	4 /	5 /	6 /	7 /	8 /	9 /	10 /	11 /	12 /
No. of Parties	/ 0 /	14 /	9 /	2 /	2 /	7 /	2 /	0 /	1 /	2 /	0 /	2 /

Persons/Party	/ 13 /	14 /	15 /	16 /	17 /	18 /	19 /	20 /	21 /	22 /	23 /	24 /	25 /
No. of Parties	/ 0 /	1 /	0 /	0 /	0 /	1 /	0 /	0 /	0 /	0 /	0 /	0 /	1 /

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<https://archive.org/details/smitherfloate1982mont>

Craft Type

Each party averaged 1.9 craft in 1982 compared to 2.4 in 1980. This decline in the number of craft per party may be due to the increase in the proportion of rafts which may have a greater load capacity than canoes. Canoes and rafts together comprised 87% of all craft reported (90% in 1980). The increase in the proportion of rafts over canoes may indicate a growing number of novice floaters; considering that a raft requires less skill to operate safely than a canoe.

Type of Craft /	Raft	Canoe	Row Boat	Kayak	McKenzie	Flat Bottom	Drift	
No. Reported /	51	22	4	3	2	1	1	84
Percent /	61	26	5	4	2	1	1	100%

Professional Guides

Three (7%) out of 44 parties were professionally guided.

FLOAT DETAILS

Starting Dates and Trip Length

To a large degree, the Smith River regulates its own float season. The river does not attract many floaters until after spring run-off, and by late July the low flow rate and obstructing boulders are an effective deterrent.

Thirty-eight percent of the seasonal use occurred in June, and 61% in July. A 1-month period from June 23 to July 23 saw 84% of the rivers reported use with the median occurring on July 4. No use was reported in May despite the Floater Logs being available throughout the month. Saturday was the most popular day of the week to begin a float trip and Sunday was by far the least popular.

With the exception of one floater at each end, all reported their put-in point as Camp Baker and their take-out point as Eden Bridge. Boxes were provided for distribution and collection of Logs only at these two points, which will introduce some bias. The exceptions were one put-in at the Smith River Fishing Access Site and one take-out at Cow Coulee. These were not the same parties.

The average float trip lasted 3.5 days in both 1980 and 1982. In 1982 the trip length ranged from two to five days, with the exception of a single one day trip from Camp Baker to the Cow Coulee vicinity.

Starting Dates

	Parties	%	%	Cum.			Cum.			Cum.		
				July	Parties	%	%	Aug.	Parties	%	%	
June	1				1				1			
	2				2	2	5	43	2			
	3				3	2	5	48	3	1	2	100
	4				4	1	2	50	4			
	5				5	2	5	55	5			
	6				6	2	5	59	6			
	7	1	2	2	7	2	5	64	7			
	8				8	1	2	66	8			
	9				9				9			
	10				10	1	2	68	10			
	11				11				11			
	12	1	2	5	12	2	5	73	12			
	13				13	1	2	75	13			
	14				14				14			
	15				15	2	5	80	15			
	16	1	2	7	16	2	5	84	16			
	17				17	1	2	86	17			
	18	1	2	9	18				18			
	19				19				19			
	20				20				20			
	21				21	2	5	91	21			
	22				22				22			
	23	1	2	11	23	1	2	93	23			
	24	2	5	16	24				24			
	25	2	5	20	25				25			
	26	5	11	32	26	1	2	95	26			
	27				27	1	2	98	27			
	28	2	5	36	28				28			
	29	1	2	39	29				29			
	30				30				30			
					31				31			
Total	17	38%	39%		26	61%	98%		1	2%	100%	

Floaters	Saturday		Sunday		Trip Start Days				
	10	23%	1	2%	Monday	8	Tuesday	6	
Percent						18%		14%	
									8
									18%

Floaters	Saturday		Sunday		Trip End Days				
	12	5	8	2	Tuesday		Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Percent	29%	12%	19%	5%			5%	12%	19%

Times In and Out

Times of departure or "time-in" at Camp Baker were pretty evenly distributed during the first day of the float. Time-in ranged from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. with 56% of the floaters in before noon. There was a slight concentration of put-ins between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m., and between 2:00 and 4:00 p.m. The morning concentration may represent many of the floaters who spent their first night at Camp Baker, and the afternoon concentration may have been the result of floaters launching on the day of arrival at Camp Baker.

The times of "take-out" on the last day of the float were concentrated with 87% taking place between 10:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Take-out times ranged from 9:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Times In and Out

Time-In First Day	Parties	Cum.		Time-Out Last Day	Parties	Cum.	
		%	%			%	%
7:00 a.m.	2	5	5	7:00 a.m.			
7:30				7:30			
8:00	3	7	12	8:00			
8:30	1	2	15	8:30			
9:00				9:00			
9:30	1	2	17	9:30	1	3	3
10:00	4	10	27	10:00			
10:30	3	7	34	10:30	1	3	6
11:00	6	15	49	11:00	2	6	13
11:30	3	7	56	11:30	2	6	19
12:00				12:00	2	6	26
12:30	1	2	59	12:30	1	3	29
1:00	2	5	63	1:00	2	6	35
1:30	1	2	66	1:30	2	6	42
2:00	2	5	71	2:00	5	16	58
2:30				2:30			
3:00	4	10	80	3:00	2	6	65
3:30				3:30	1	3	68
4:00	3	7	88	4:00	4	13	81
4:30	1	2	90	4:30	3	10	90
5:00	1	2	93	5:00			
5:30	1	2	95	5:30			
6:00	1	2	98	6:00	1	3	94
6:30				6:30	1	3	97
7:00				7:00	1	3	100
7:30				7:30			
8:00	1	2	100	8:00			
Total	41	94%	100%	Total	31	96%	100%

Note - Not all Logs reported a time in or out.

¹Does not equal 100% because of rounding.

CAMP LOCATIONS

In general, boat camps appear to be well used by the Smith's floating visitors. Seventy-two percent of all nights recorded were spent at a boat camp.

	Night #1	Night #2	Night #3	Night #4	Cum.
Boat Camp Nights	22	29	19	3	73
Percent	55%	78%	90%	75%	72%
Non-Boat Camp Nights	18	8	2	1	29
Percent	45%	22%	10%	25%	28%

Promoting public Boat Camp use is an important goal to avoid trespass on private property for camping purposes.

An interesting trend is the increase in boat camp use with longevity on the river. During the first night only 55% of the users stayed at boat camps. The second night saw 78% of the floaters at boat camps and by the third night the visitation increased to 90%. The fourth night received only 75% boat camp use, but by this time there were so few people left on the river that this ratio may be misleading.

The explanation for this trend may be two fold. First, the Spring Creek Boat Camp is the only camp within the first 19 miles of the float trip. Since Spring Creek Boat Camp is only five miles from Camp Baker, floaters may not have been ready to camp upon reaching it. Tenderfoot Boat Camp on the otherhand, is 14 miles beyond Spring Creek Boat Camp and floaters may have been ready to camp before reaching it. As a result camps would be established between these two boat camps as is verified on the "Night #1" map (next page).

Second, it may have taken floaters some practice at spotting boat camps in time to exit the river. This seems to be verified by the concentration of camps in undesigned areas on the first night below Spring Creek Boat Camp and Two Creek Boat Camp. This same kind of "clumping" can be seen on the "Night #2" map below Parker Flat Boat Camp and Black Butte Boat Camp.

Of the 11 boat camps between Camp Baker and Eden Bridge, four stand out in their popularity as represented on the following maps. During the first night Spring Creek Boat Camp and Two Creek Boat Camp attracted a combined total of 38% of the floaters. Again, Two Creek Boat Camp combined with Cow Coulee Boat Camp attracted 35% of the floaters on the second night. Forty-three percent of the floats stayed at Black Butte Boat Camp on the third night, and this boat camp hosted three out of the four float parties remaining on the river on the fourth night. These four boat camps provided 74% of all recorded camp locations during the season.

Parties	Spring Creek B.C.	Two Creek B.C.	Cow Coulee B.C.	Black Butte B.C.	Subtotal	Other Camps	Total
Parties	13	11	16	47	26	73	
Percent	10%	18%	15%	22%	64%	36%	100%

Smith
River Guide



FLOWS
NORTH

- STREAM
- INTERTINCTION TAHKEE
- COUNTY BOUNDARY
- FOREST BOUNDARY
- STATE SECONDARY ROAD
- COUNTY ROAD
- FOREST TRAIL
- PUBLIC LAND
- LANGUAGE ROW
- BOAT CAMP

x^3 three parties camped

x³ three parties camped

CAMPSITES, NIGHT #1

Smith River Guide



RIVER FLOWS NORTH

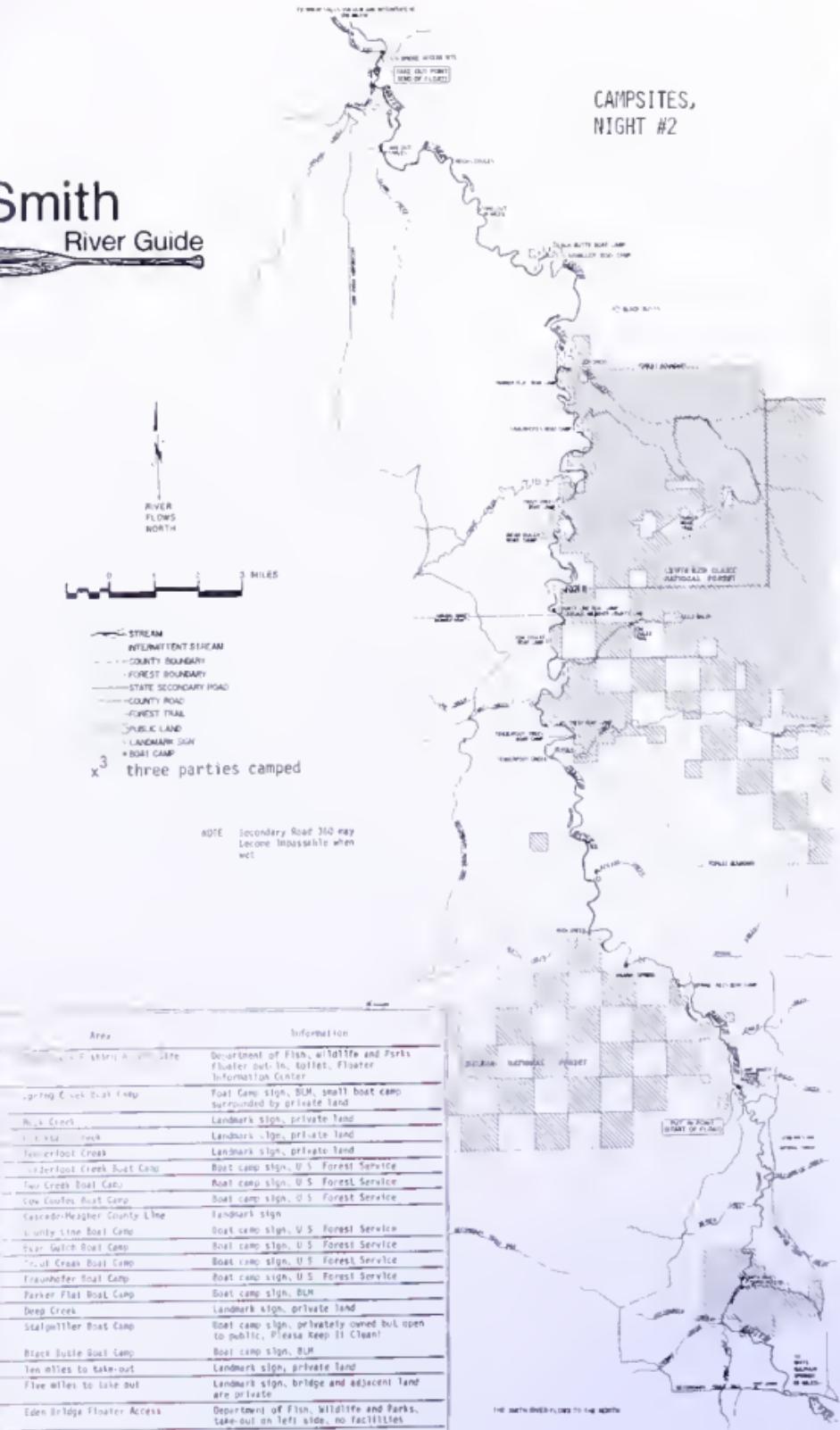
0 1 2 3 MILES

- STREAM
- - - COUNTY BOUNDARY
- - - FOREST BOUNDARY
- STATE SECONDARY ROAD
- COUNTY ROAD
- - - FOREST TRAIL
- PUBLIC LAND
- LANDMARK SIGN
- BOAT CAMP

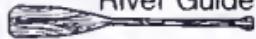
x³ three parties camped

NOTE: Secondary Road 360 may become impassable when wet.

CAMPSITES,
NIGHT #2



Smith River Guide



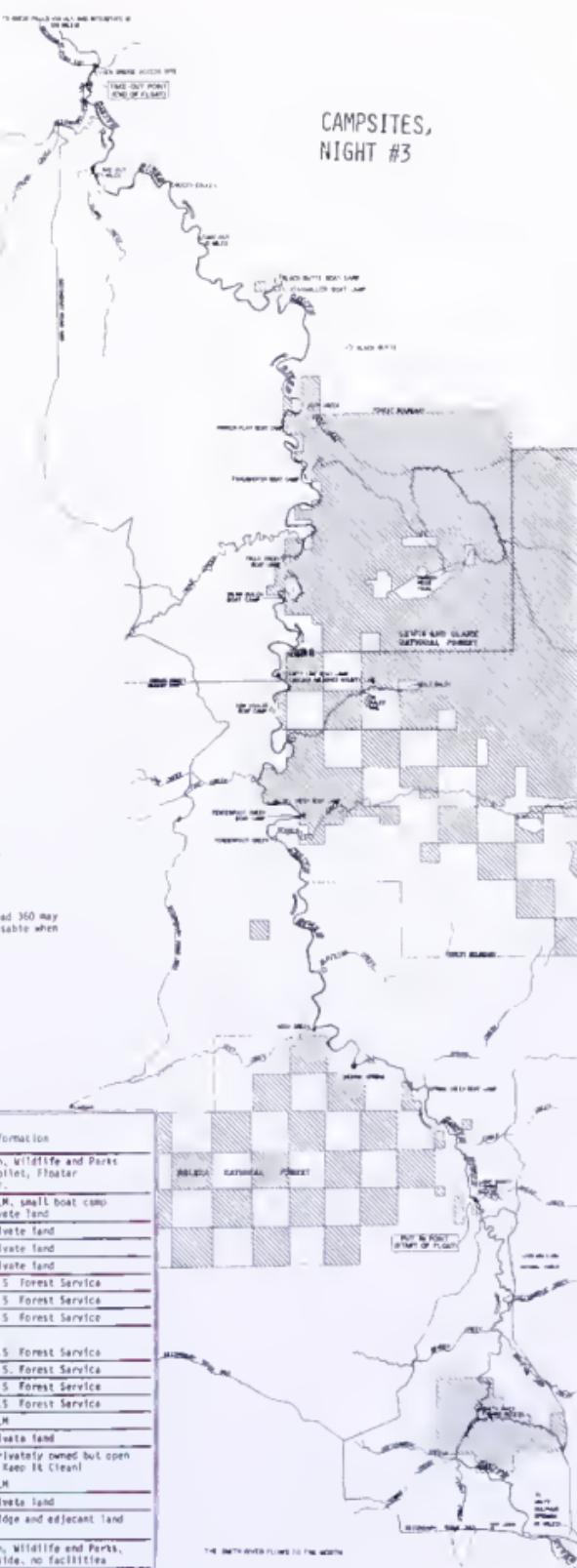
1 0 3 MILES

RIVER FLOWS NORTH

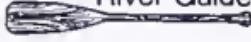
- STREAM
- - INTERMITTENT STREAM
- - - COUNTY BOUNDARY
- - - FOREST BOUNDARY
- - - STATE SECONDARY ROAD
- - - COUNTY ROAD
- - - FOREST TRAIL
- - - PUBLIC LAND
- - - LANDMARK SIGN
- + BOAT CAMP

X³ three parties camped

NOTE Secondary Road 360 may become impassable when wet.



Smith River Guide



RIVER FLOWS NORTH

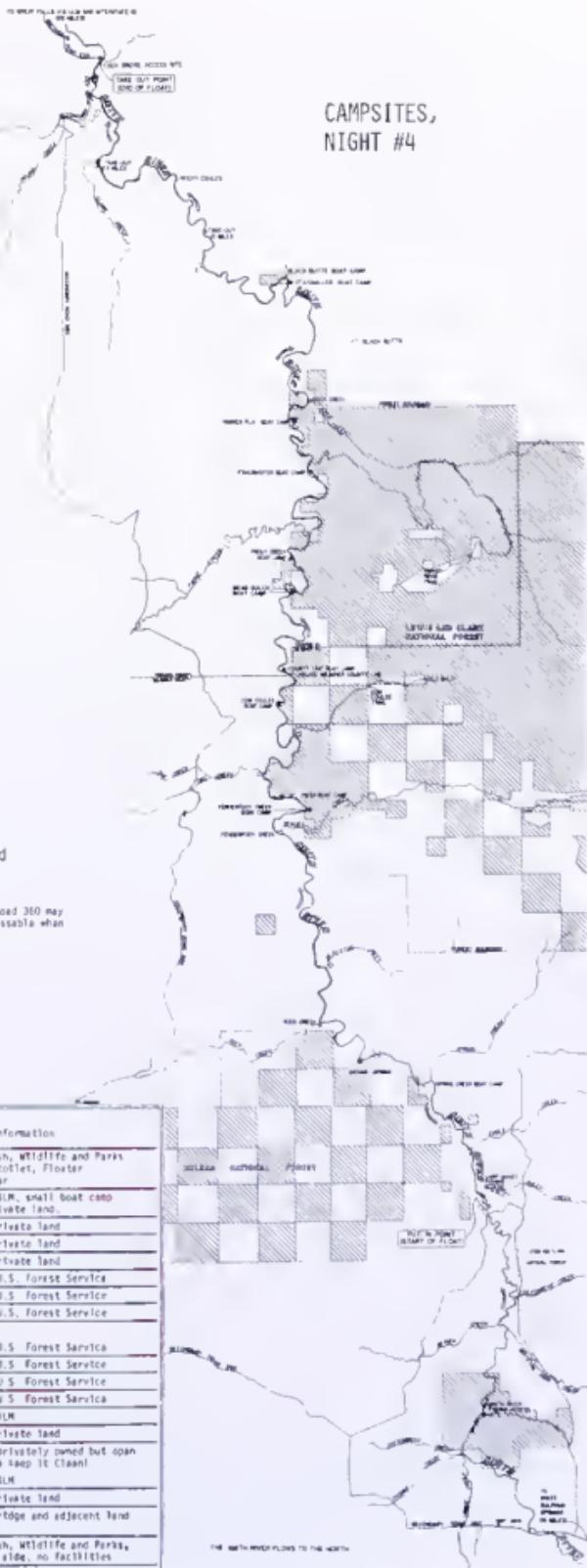
0 1 2 3 MILES

— STREAM
— COUNTY BOUNDARY
— FOREST BOUNDARY
— STATE SECONDARY ROAD
— COUNTY ROAD
— FOREST TRAIL
— PUBLIC LAND
■ LANDMARK SIGN
■ BOAT CAMP

\times^3 three parties camped

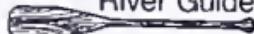
NOTE Secondary Road 360 may become impassable when wet

Area	Information
59 Camp Baker Fishing Access Site	Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks floater put-in, toilet, Floater Information Center
54 Spring Creek Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, BLM, small boat camp surrounded by private land
49 Root Creek	Landmark sign, private land
87 Blacktail Creek	Landmark sign, private land
82 Tenderfoot Creek	Landmark sign, private land
80 Tenderfoot Creek Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
39 Two Creek Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
38 Cow Coulee Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
35 Cascade-Meagher County Line	Landmark sign
County Line Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
31 Bear Gulch Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
30 Trout Creek Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
26 Fraunhofer Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
23 Parker Flat Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, BLM
22 Deep Creek	Landmark sign, private land
15 Stalgemiller Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, privately owned but open to public, Please keep it Clean!
Black Butte Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, BLM
10 Ten miles to take-out	Landmark sign, private land
5 Five miles to take-out	Landmark sign, bridge and adjacent land are private
0 Eden Bridge Floater Access	Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks take-out on left side, no facilities





Smith River Guide



RIVER
FLOWS
NORTH

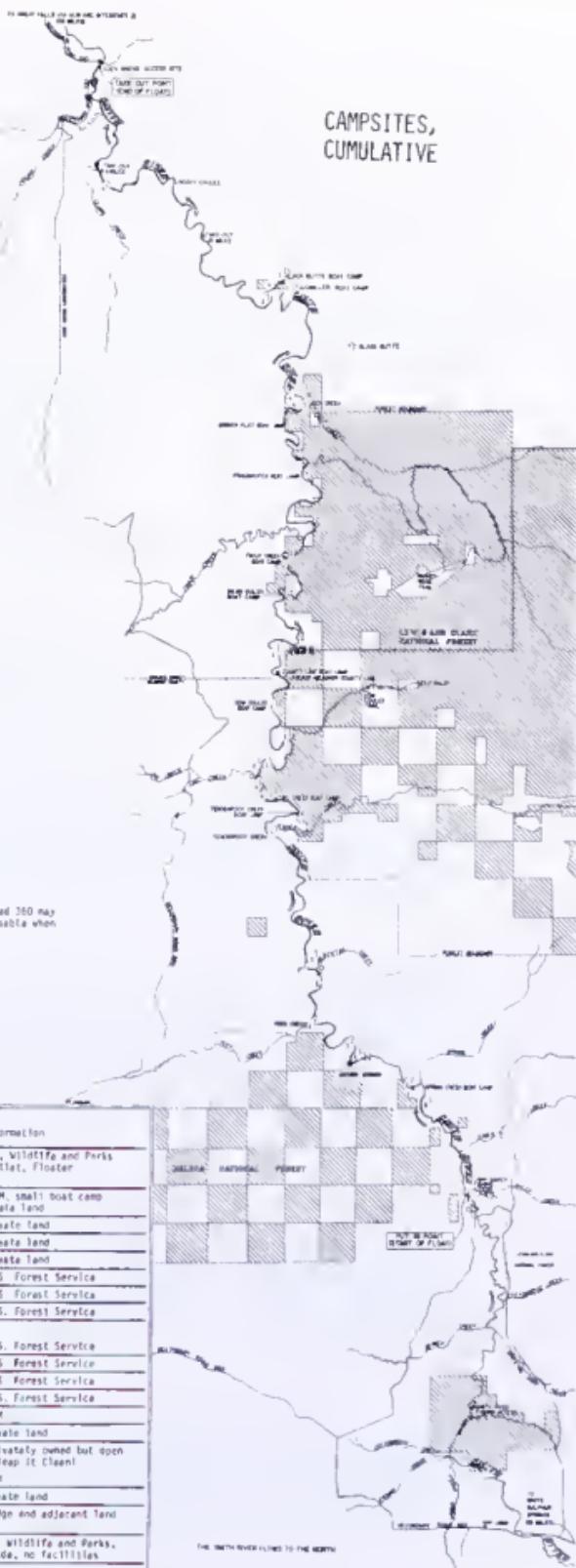
2 MILES

- STREAM
- INTERMITTENT STREAM
- COUNTY BOUNDARY
- FOREST BOUNDARY
- STATE SECONDARY ROAD
- COUNTY ROAD
- FOREST TRAIL
- PUBLIC LAND
- LANDMARK SIGN
- * BOAT CAMP

x³ three parties camped

NOTE: Secondary Road 380 may become impassable when wet.

CAMPSITES, CUMULATIVE



Area	Information
Polar Fishing Access Site	Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks float-in, toilet, floater Information Center
Long Creek Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, BLM, small boat camp surrounded by private land
49 Rock Creek	Landmark sign, private land
47 Blacktail Creek	Landmark sign, private land
43 Tandarfoot Creek	Landmark sign, private land
40 Tandarfoot Creek Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
29 Two Creek Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
36 Cow Couote Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
73 Cascade-McCoy County Line	Landmark sign
County Line Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
11 Bear Gulch Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
30 Trout Creek Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
26 Fraughtor Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, U.S. Forest Service
23 Parker Flat Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, BLM
22 Deer Creek	Landmark sign, private land
15 Stalgillot Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, privately owned but open to public. Please keep it clean!
Black Butte Boat Camp	Boat camp sign, BLM
10 Tan miles to take-out	Landmark sign, private land
5 Five miles to take-out	Landmark sign, bridge and adjacent land are private
0 Edan Bridge Floater Access	Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, take out on left side, no facilities

CAMPSITE IMPRESSIONS

No overnight stays were reported on floater logs for County Line Boat Camp. For all other boat camps, positive comments were recorded as seen on the following pages.

Comments indicating a need for attention were also received for most boat camps. These fell into a number of categories as follows:

Litter

At four boat camps and one undesignated camp site litter or other unsightliness was reported. The degree of the problem ranged from "a few papers" at Trout Creek Boat Camp to "filthy" at Black Butte Boat Camp. Litter related comments were recorded for:

Cow Coulee Boat Camp
Trout Creek Boat Camp
Parker Flat Boat Camp
Black Butte Boat Camp
Deep Creek area

One floater suggested, "at put-in point emphasis on 'pack it in-pack it out.' Perhaps, plastic bags and ties furnished for the slobs."

Latrines

A need for latrines was indicated at four areas:

Indian Springs
Cow Coulee Boat Camp
Black Butte Boat Camp
Eden Bridge

Shade-shelter

Boat camps located around trees seem to be appreciated, as indicated at Bear Gulch Boat Camp. Two parties commented on the lack of shade at the Stagmiller Boat Camp and the Two Creek Boat Camp was rated as "good, except we wished there were trees" and "nice, but could use some shade."

Drinking water

The availability of drinking water was important enough to prompt five comments at Bear Gulch Boat Camp, one party was disappointed at not finding fresh water, while another party was so delighted at discovering the nearby spring that they even reported its temperature at 42°F. Yet another party rated the Bear Gulch spring as the "best." The fresh creek water at Deep Creek was "appreciated" while "no water" was reported at Stagmiller Boat Camp. One floater suggested, "springs and creeks should be marked as potable on map, had drinking water problems."

Signage (see also page 20)

Considerable management attention has been given to the identification of landmarks and boat camps with signs since the survey of 1980. A few site specific comments persisted this year, however. It was suggested that Deep Creek Boat Camp "could be marked better, sooner," and that Black Butte and Stagmiller Boat Camps "should be more easily seen." One party noted that the Eden Bridge take-out was "not marked" and another party agreed a "warning sign" was needed at the Eden Bridge. Yet another log entry suggested, "markers could be better for campsites and end of float."

Crowding (see also page 20)

Spring Creek Boat Camp and Cow Coulee Boat Camp were both complimented for being "low impacted" and offering "private" camp sites, respectively. Black Butte Boat Camp was described as

being "quiet and isolated." Two Creek Boat Camp, Trout Creek Boat Camp, Bear Gulch Boat Camp, and Stagmiller Boat Camp, however, were said to be in need of "more room" or reported as "crowded" or "full." All of the latter reports occurred in late June or July when visitation was at its peak.

More criticism was directed at Black Butte Boat Camp than any other single camp. Dissatisfaction was directed primarily at the steep incline from the river. Log entries reported, "poor spot, too steep to campsite with gear," "too hard to climb, bad access," "steep pull-out," and one party suggested the camp "needs steps up from the river." Other criticisms were "too much mud," and "very brushy."

This criticism must be put in perspective. As seen previously, Black Butte Boat Camp received more use than any other boat camp on the Smith River. In addition, there were a number of favorable comments directed at Black Butte Boat Camp such as: "very nice," "great," "gorgeous," "impressive cliff," and "good, should be more like this one!"

Individual Campsite Impressions

Camp Baker Put-In

- Good
- Needs fire wood
- Real good put-in point

Spring Creek

- Fine
- Adequate - lots of wet grass in the morning though
- Good
- Very nice, clean, low impacted (6/24)
- Great
- Good clean camp, good fishing, varmints at night

Indian Spring

- Very nice
- Excellent
- A latrine would be a help at some of the campsites

Blacktail (between Blacktail Creek and forest boundary)

- Good camping
- Nice camp

Broken Tree (on forest boundary below Blacktail Creek)

- Very good

Tenderfoot Boat Camp

- Dangerous to rafts. The camping site was uncampable
- Much too long to first campsite - nice to have something between Indian Springs and Tenderfoot Boat Camp
- Very nice/even clean - excellent

Two Creek Boat Camp

- Excellent
- Nice, but could use some shade
- Fair
- Good, except we wished there were trees
- OK
- Nice camp, should be more available room for campsites (7/12)
- Not enough docking facility, site is beautiful
- Very nice
- Very nice
- Flat, clean, loads of wood
- Clean
- OK, usually plenty of wood, amazingly no mosquitoes
- Very good

Ted Cope's

- Great

Below Two Creek

- Real nice, little area for one group, very clean
- Nice area, top of trees, good place to pitch tent, should be marked

Cow Coulee Boat Camp

- Very nice
- Slight leftover clutter
- Excellent
- Good
- Good camp, clean
- Clean but junky. Several piles of s ____ and toilet paper near camp. Perhaps there needs to be some instruction at this sight
- Great
- Very nice, private, clean, lovely meadow (7/24)

County Line Boat Camp

- No log entries

Bear Gulch Boat Camp

- No fresh water anywhere, Bear Gulch camp full, also cows everywhere
- Good, delicious spring water, 42°
- Nice, trees for shade, best spring, clean site
- Full (6/26)

Trout Creek Boat Camp

- Made out OK, long distance from river
- Clean, except for a few papers, very scenic, the actual camp site was much too crowded so we camped right before the "leaving public lands" sign, much nicer
- Very nice
- Good clean camp, excellent fishing and wildlife

Fraunhofer Boat Camp

- Excellent, spent a full day, large flies biting terribly
- Very nice

Parker Flat Boat Camp

- Fair
- Good, but lots of sand, cows around camp
- Good, not clean as Cow Coulee and Blacktail Creek
- OK

Deer Creek

- Fair
- Pretty good, fresh water from creek was appreciated. Could be marked better, sooner
- Littered with previous occupants unburned and some unburnable garbage, otherwise super!

Stagmiller Boat Camp

- Campsites at Stagmiller and Black Butte should be more easily seen
- All sites crowded (7/4)...Stagmiller Camp a poor site
- A little sandy but we enjoyed it
- Clean, no shade, drab, nice clean camp site
- Rocky and not much shade, better at each end of the bar
- Not any shade
- No water

Black Butte Boat Camp

- Needs steps up from river, needs toilet to improve sanitation, all sites need fire rings to locate people where they will do the least resource damage
- Very nice
- Filthy campground
- Campsites at Stagmiller and Black Butte should be more easily seen
- Nice
- Nice
- Impressive cliff across river, steep getting up, nice to be warned its the last camp
- Poor spot, too steep to campsite with gear
- We camped on right side, very brushy, not a very good site, but could be improved
- Too much mud in campsite and too many houses
- Good! Should be more like this one
- Sure wish there were a couple sites past Black Butte to camp, we weren't ready to leave river yet.
- Steep pullout, but quiet and isolated (6/12)
- Too hard to climb, bad access
- Great! Firewood in camp ring. Fishing fair to poor. Lots of service berries. Rattlesnake
- Gorgeous, very private and peaceful...clean, nice to have firewood (7/25)

Eden Bridge Take-out

- Nice take-out
- Didn't see the five mile out marker at all and Eden Bridge is not marked, almost missed it
- Could use a toilet for people taking out
- Should be outhouse and garbage receptacle at Eden Bridge
- Need warning sign

FLOAT IMPRESSIONS

To more easily analyze the float impressions logged, they have been catagorized as follows:

Wildlife

Nine species of wildlife were noted in the Floater's Logs. Deer were sighted most often. Only one log indicated a disappointing number of wildlife sightings. The number of sightings for each species is listed below:

Deer	-	11	Raccoon	-	2
Beaver	-	4	Great Blue Heron	-	1
Mink	-	4	Otter	-	1
Bear	-	3	Ducks	-	1
			Rattlesnake	-	1

Insect Pests

Only three comments were received concerning biting flies and two of those were expressing relief that there were few or none.

- no mosquitoes (Two Creek Boat Camp, 6/17)
- few mosquitoes (Eden Bridge, 6/30)
- large flies were biting (Fraunhofer, 7/23)

Fishing

There were slightly more fishermen who found the Smith River to be favorable than those who found it otherwise. As a whole, the unfavorable comments came during the first part of the season when high, turbid water may have been a factor.

Favorable:

- Lots of fish (6/8)
- 3 good fishing (6/26, 7/3, 7/23)
- Lures work best (7/6)
- Great fishing (Camp Baker-Two Creek, 7/7)
- Incredible fishing (Two Creek-Fraunhofer, 7/8)
- Caught a lot of fish (7/8)
- Bigger fish near Parker Flats (7/16)
- Good Fishing, catch and release (7/16)
- Big fish near end (7/17)
- Nice fishing (7/21)

Unfavorable:

- 2 fishing is slow (6/25, 6/26)
- Poor for flies (Camp Baker, 6/26)
- 2 fishing no good (6/27, 6/28)
- Fishing is poor (7/5)
- Salmon flies on water and no fish rising (7/6)
- Fair to poor (7/15)

Neither Favorable or Unfavorable:

- Lots of small fish (7/15)

Scenery

There was an abundance of positive comments concerning the scenery along the float trip. In fact the comments were unanimously in praise of the Smith's natural beauty. The only negative comments concerned man's housing projects along the river.

Positive			
4	beautiful canyons nice canyon		fantastic pleased
3	beautiful country very nice country lovely country	2	great good
3	beautiful scenery incredible scenery		excellent



Negative

- Just plain disgusting to see the "subdivisions"
- The houses are, of course, out of place but tolerable. Perhaps a flash flood...

Crowding (see page 14 also)

Only one log entry in the Float Impression section indicated there were "too many people" (Camp Baker, 7/23). Although a few more entries related to overcrowding were found in the Campsite Impression section, it does not appear to be a serious problem.

Signing and Mapping (see page 14 also)

Management effort in recent years to improve signing appear to be paying off. Few comments were received and they were either positive or constructively critical, "good directions (lots of signs) on shuttle" and "good maps and well marked." There was a suggestion to "denote mileage on map between identifiable land marks." This suggestion was already implemented in the form of a mileage chart on the Smith River Guide. The author of this comment obviously did not notice the chart. One floater suggested, "it would help to have in advance relative size of campsites." Another log entry read, "we enjoyed the entire trip. The only way it could be possibly improved would be to mark private land a little better."

Motorized Use

Administrative Rule 12.6.901 prohibits the use of motorized water craft on the Smith River. Despite this prohibition, two reports of an air boat on the river were received. One of these parties was also disturbed about 4-wheel drive use in the area.

"Great day except for air boat a _____ h _____ who had to show off his power and prop wash." (6/19)
"We're upset at 4-wheel drive and air boats crossing river." (7/14)

Float Obstacles

Trees:

Most concerns with logs or trees in the water originated from the lower portion of the float trip where large cottonwood groves line the banks of the Smith River. Most reports also occurred during the first half of the season when high, fast water may have made the fallen trees a little harder to avoid.

- A large tree--would help floaters if it could be removed--between 10 and 5 mile take-outs. (6/20)
- Too many trees (6/29)
- Rescued some gear off a cottonwood (6/30)
- Had thrills getting around cottonwoods (6/30)
- Last five miles thick with downfall (7/4)
- Lot of downed trees (Fraunhofer-Eden, 7/24)
- Bad log jam-portaged some (8/6)

Fences:

Fences crossing the river have been an annually recurring problem for floaters. During the past season, methods of controlling roaming livestock while not restricting float traffic has been experimented with. This work as well as the concern's of the landowners have had some positive results as can be seen by the comments below.

- The ranger has done a good job in defusing this wire problem, along with nature. The cables constitute a serious hazard (6/18)
- The rubber hose idea on the fences is an excellent idea (7/4)
- Glad most of the fences are down

However, not all comments were positive

- Fences very hazardous (6/28)
- Can't see any real reason for fences except to aggravate floaters (7/13)
- Mark cable across at Anderson's--very dangerous (7/29)
- New fencing caused great trouble (8/3)

Water and Rocks:

Judging from the number of comments, the rapid current and exposed rocks seemed to surprise many floaters but they did not all consider these factors to detract from their enjoyment of the float trip.

- 4 - Water is high (6/25, 6/28, 6/29, 7/2)
- Much to our surprise this was not a river to be run by beginning canoeists. It demanded more attention than we thought it would (6/26)
 - Tore hole in raft (6/26)
 - River fast but not too strenuous (6/26)
 - Fast and high for beginners (6/27)
 - This was the day we found the trickiest spots in the river (below Stagmiller Boat Camp, 6/28)
 - We listened to too many bad stories about the Smith. It really wasn't bad (6/29)
 - Dumped canoe (7/2)
 - Lots of fast water (7/4)
 - Surprised at tightness of river. Had to stay alert. Walked canoe around three big waves (7/4)
 - Some white water (7/5)
 - Ripped boat badly (7/6)
 - Low water, damage to canoes (7/17)
 - Too many rocks in some places (7/24)
 - Navigating boulder strewn rapids was both fun and challenging (7/24)
 - Rapids were fun (7/26)
 - Fast water through rocks (7/28)
 - Fast water rough and rocky, low water (7/29)
 - River too low, hitting rocks (8/3)
 - Lots of rough places and close calls because of rocks--canoes damaged worse than expected (8/4)

General Comments

Although there are criticisms of the Smith River float experience, as seen on previous pages, there is also an overall abundance of praise for the Smith River. From reading the following comments it is obvious the Smith River has become dear to many a river adventurer:

- Lots of excitement
- 3 - Good trip
- Interesting float
- Groovy
- 3 - Great
- 3 - Nice
- Fair
- Great-perfect
- No disappointments
- Ended too soon
- Too bad its over
- Sad to see the trip come to an end
- Went too fast
- Had a wonderful time and hated to see it end
- Exciting water
- 2 - All pleasure
- Very good float
- Good waves and eddies
- Nice to see such a clean river
- Fine river. Treat it well, Ten or 15 years from now people will love you for it.
- We would like to see regulation of numbers of floaters and the fishing be more closely regulated. We love this river and the kind of canoeing it offers us in Montana--unique water and country--let's keep it special!
- You've done an excellent job in establishing mapping and maintaining a river route so more people can enjoy the beauty of the Smith!
- Had a wonderful time, saw a lot of people along the way but only briefly so one could easily find privacy and quiet all along the way. Campsites are well kept.
- Really appreciate the work you folks have done to mark and establish boat camps. I would like to see more people use the camps. Good work, keep it up.

SUMMARY

More than half of the Smith River floaters came from the three surrounding metropolitan areas, Lewis and Clark County (Helena), Cascade County (Great Falls), and Missoula County (Missoula). The average party consisted of 5.7 persons with 1.9 craft, most often rafts but canoes were also popular. Eighty-four percent of the float trips logged, occurred between June 23 and July 23. The most popular day of the week to launch a trip was Saturday, and they lasted an average of 3.5 days. Of the eleven boat camps on the Smith River, 64% of the use occurred at four of them--Spring Creek Boat Camp, Two Creek Boat Camp, Cow Coulee Boat Camp, and Black Butte Boat Camp.

From floater comments entered on the log it appeared as though there was general satisfaction with the Smith River experience. Litter and garbage was not reported as a problem often and when it was reported it was usually not a serious problem. Floaters are, however, starting to see a need for some strategically placed latrines or at least increased instruction on the disposal of personal waste. Boat camps located around trees for shade and shelter were appreciated. The need for a drinking water source at campsites is becoming more pronounced. Past efforts at signing are paying off, but the Eden Bridge take-out still should be more effectively marked. Crowding was not found to be a problem. Concern about fences was not as intense as might have been expected, and some comments indicated an improvement in the fence situation.

There were more comments praising the beauty of the Smith River than on any other single subject. Log entries would indicate that the Smith River, in spite of any shortcomings, is a valuable recreational asset to Montana. It is a treasure worth preserving.

408/A

50 copies of this publication were produced at a unit cost of \$0.25 per copy for a total cost of \$22.50 which includes \$22.50 for printing and \$0.00 for distribution.



